GENERAL PLAN CIRCULATION AND AIR QUALITY ELEMENT

FOR THE

CITY OF GILROY

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INTRODUCTION

The Circulation Element has two major purposes:

- To state the guiding policies of the City with respect to transportation of people and goods within its planning area
- To identify actions, such as street extensions and widening, which are necessary to ensure that the goals embodied in these guiding policies will be achieved.

An Air Quality Element is described in the State General Plan Guidelines as an optional element that cities and counties may wish to adopt.

The Air Quality Element identifies the following:

- Existing and potential contributors of air pollution
- Supporting policies for reducing air pollution to improve air quality for both Gilroy and the surrounding region.

The adoption of an Air Quality Element would make it Gilroy's policy to protect the health, safety, welfare and environmental quality of Gilroy and the larger Bay Area by promoting community development which is compatible with air quality standards and minimizing the impact of future development on air quality.

In a larger sense, the Air Quality Element is part of the regional strategy for improving air quality. While air quality is often regarded as a regional problem, local land use and growth decisions by cities and counties will profoundly affect the success of whatever technology is available regionally to combat air pollution. The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) has adopted a resolution urging cities and counties within the nine-county Bay Area to adopt Air Quality Elements.[1]

[1] Bay Area Air Quality Management District, Resolution Number 1666, May 21, 1986

GOALS AND POLICIES

Goal 1: Develop and Maintain a Balanced Transportation System

The City will strive to achieve a functional and balanced transportation system which assures access for all, is compatible with existing and proposed land uses, and minimizes emissions of air pollutants. The coordinated multi-modal system should accommodate private motor vehicles, pedestrians, bicycles and mass transit.

Supporting Policies

1. The City will ensure that the existing and proposed highways, streets, bike ways and pedestrian paths serve the functions they are intended to serve, while protecting the character of residential neighborhoods.

2. Proposed expressway, arterial, collector street and bicycle path alignments will be planned and reserved in advance of development in areas in which increased traffic will be generated. Development will be set back along the entire right-of-way (ROW) with sufficient width to accommodate anticipated future traffic requirements.

3. The City shall adopt official plan lines for all designated expressways, arterials, collector streets, and bike paths within the City of Gilroy. The City of Gilroy Standard Details indicate ROW requirements. These standards should be followed except for previously developed facilities where the same traffic function can be performed with a lesser ROW, and a lesser ROW will avoid significant impacts to either the neighborhood or the environment in general. The proposed major street system (designed to accommodate traffic at build-out of the General Plan) is shown on the General Plan Map.

4. The City shall work with Santa Clara County to adopt official plan lines for all circulation facilities designated on the General Plan map which are within the jurisdiction of the County.

5. Street systems in residential areas will be designed to: encourage direct connections between neighborhoods while discouraging automobile through traffic within neighborhoods; to encourage internal movement by bicycling and walking; and to provide safer and quieter neighborhoods.

6. New development will not be permitted southwest of Uvas Creek unless such development provides adequate bridge service.

7. To maximize safety and traffic-carrying capacity, and to maintain the high-speed inter-city character of both Santa Teresa Boulevard and Hecker Pass Highway, driveway intersections on these expressway routes shall not be allowed. Street intersections shall be minimal, with an average spacing of one-half mile between intersections. The City should seek and commit itself to agreements with the City of Morgan

15. The City shall involve private development in providing bikeways and support facilities when such facilities pass through or about a development site.

16. The comprehensive citywide street improvement fee shall be used to finance General Plan bikeway improvements in conjunction with roadway improvements.

Goal 4: Promote Transit Service and Use

The City will encourage the continued development and expansion of local and regional public transit systems which are responsive to the changing needs of the City of Gilroy area residents.

Supporting Policies

17. New residential and commercial development will be planned to fully accommodate, enhance, and facilitate public transit, including pedestrian and bicycle access to transit.

18. The City will cooperate with the County of Santa Clara transit planning effort and especially will plan for new rail and/or other express services to central Santa Clara County.

Goal 5: Preserve Scenic Routes

The scenic character and ecology of the hillsides to the west of the City will be preserved in the design of all circulation facilities.

Supporting Policies

19. Any roadways which must pass through hillside areas will be designed so as to preserve the ecological and scenic character of the hillsides.

20. High quality vistas from scenic routes in the Planning Area will be preserved.

Goal 6: Improve Gilroy's Air Quality

Some of the pollutants in the atmosphere at Gilroy are generated upwind in other urban areas. The City's ability to control such emissions is limited; measures to control these pollutants must be regional in nature. The exposure of Gilroy residents to local pollutants such as carbon monoxide, dust, odors, and toxic air contaminants, however, is directly a result of the local transportation system and land use patterns.

28. Require air quality mitigation for new development. Where projects such as retail commercial and residential developments do not lend themselves to trip reduction through ride-sharing for example, other forms of Transportation Systems Management (TSM) and non-TSM measures need to be emphasized to provide off-sets for air quality impacts. Examples of on-site mitigation are provision of bicycle/pedestrian amenities, and development of on-site day care and commercial facilities. Examples of off-site mitigation include creation of park-and-ride lots, construction of transit or pedestrian amenities, and monetary support of transit. Such measures should be part of the environmental review process.

Goal 8: Contribute Towards Improving Regional Air Quality

Gilroy is within the nine-county Bay Area Air Quality Management District. Located at the southern end of the Santa Clara Valley, Gilroy is the recipient of pollutants generated many miles upwind.

Gilroy is also located just north of the border of the North Central Coast Air Basin, comprised of Santa Cruz, Monterey and San Benito County. While air quality problems in this adjacent air basin are not as severe as in the Bay Area Air Basin, this air basin does not meet all state and federal ambient air quality standards. The Bay Area Air Basin has been identified as a contributor to air quality problems in the North Central Coast Air Basin, primarily through transport of pollutants south from the Santa Clara Valley.

The reduction of air emissions from Gilroy would, therefore, have beneficial effects on two air basins.

Supporting Policies

29. Cooperate with the regional air quality planning agency (the Bay Area Air Quality Management District) and agencies that deal with issues directly related to air quality such as the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), and the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) in the development and implementation of regional air quality strategies.

30. Balance jobs and housing in future development to provide Gilroy residents the opportunity to work within Gilroy, and reduce long distance commuting both to and from Gilroy. Jobs and housing should be balanced both in numbers and in salary range/housing cost.

31. Support the expansion and improvement of local and regional transit systems and ride sharing programs.

32. Support subregional coordination with other cities, counties, and planning agencies concerning land use, job/housing balance, and transportation planning as a means of improving air quality.

J. The City should maintain and improve the quality of the surface of the right-hand portion of existing roads as well as the travel lanes so that they are suitable for bicycle travel, regardless of whether or not bikeways are designated.

K. The City should design all future roads, bridges and facilities to accommodate bicycle and pedestrian travel.

L. If all other appropriate street modifications are determined to be infeasible, existing on-street parking should be removed or restricted in areas of critical width in order to facilitate traffic flow, and accommodate bike lanes.

M. The City should require safe and adequate facilities for storing and locking bicycles at trip destinations such as business and employment centers, recreation areas, major public facilities, transportation centers, and other non-residential locations. Shopping centers, industrial centers, apartments and condominiums should be required to provide bicycle parking as well as automobile parking.

N. Bike paths should be designed to be wide enough for emergency vehicles where other emergency routes do not exist, and they should be located and designed to enhance the personal safety of bicyclists.

O. Removable bollards or other devices should be used to prevent vehicles other than emergency and maintenance vehicles from using the bike paths.

P. The City should follow the criteria for bikeways outlined in the California Department of Transportation's publication *Planning and Design Criteria for Bikeways in California*. This document's key design guidelines are summarized in the General Plan appendices.

Q. A 10-foot curb lane should be provided on each side of expressways to serve as both an emergency stopping lane and a bike lane.

Mass Transit

R. Land should be reserved in the vicinity of the existing Southern Pacific terminal for potential use as a station and park-and-ride lot for commuter rail service.

S. A 42-foot wide median should be provided along Santa Teresa Boulevard to accommodate either a potential light rail line or high-occupancy vehicle lanes to central Santa Clara County.

Scenic Routes

T. The City has designated as scenic routes those roads and highways listed in the General Plan appendices. The appendix also indicates the scenic features and implementation recommendations associated with each scenic route.

U. The City should require protection of existing trees and natural features and screening of new development along Santa Teresa Boulevard and Hecker Pass Highway. The City should require new industrial development and should encourage existing industrial development to provide landscape screening along the South Valley Freeway to protect and enhance existing views of farmland and surrounding hills. The City should work with Caltrans and the County to provide additional landscaping along the freeway right-of-way to implement the designation of the freeway as a scenic highway and as the primary "visitor-serving" traffic artery in the Planning area.

Transportation Systems Management Ordinance

V. The City should develop and adopt a Transportation Systems Management (TSM) Ordinance covering existing and future large employers. This ordinance should have as a goal the reduction of daily trips as well as reduction in peak hour trips.

Air Quality Mitigation Program for New Development

W. The City should develop policies and guidelines to be used by developers and consultants in evaluating the need for air quality mitigation for projects. Under this policy new developers would be required to mitigate air quality impacts by creating offsetting reductions in air pollutant emissions by providing, for example, pedestrian or bicycle amenities, transit support, transit amenities such as bus shelters, or funding for off-site improvements such as park-and-ride lots. This is especially to be stressed where other forms of TSM measures such as ride-sharing are less effective.

APPENDIX I

STREET IMPROVEMENTS ADOPTED

AS PART OF THE GENERAL PLAN

(To Be Incorporated Into The General Plan Appendices)

APPENDIX I

STREET IMPROVEMENTS ADOPTED AS PART OF THE GENERAL PLAN

1. Tenth Street Extension

   Tenth street will be extended across Uvas Creek between Miller Avenue and Thomas Road, then follow a southwest alignment intersecting Santa Teresa Boulevard. This alignment can provide an attractive and effective bypass route for east-west through traffic.

2. Uvas Park Drive

   Uvas Park Drive should be completed as a scenic recreational roadway and neighborhood bypass. Third Street will serve as an east-west collector.

3. Masten Avenue/Fitzgerald Avenue

   This street will be developed as an arterial linking Santa Teresa Boulevard with the South Valley Freeway (Route 101).

4. New North-South Arterial East of U.S. 101

   This new facility will extend northward to Masten Avenue and southward to Bolsa Road as a major north-south arterial. It will parallel U.S. 101 approximately one-quarter to one-half mile east of the freeway for most of its length. This will provide the only north-south connection east of U.S. 101 until an east side expressway is needed.

5. Wren Avenue Extension

   This northward extension will ultimately link central Gilroy with Masten Avenue. Wren Avenue is the major north-south arterial serving the northern urban expansion area of Gilroy.

6. Cohansey Avenue Extension

   This collector street will be extended west across Santa Teresa Boulevard to Rancho Hills Drive and across U.S. 101 via a new freeway overcrossing.

7. Buena Vista Avenue Extension

   This arterial street will be realigned to align with Day Road.

8. Mantelli Drive Extension

   This roadway will be extended across Santa Teresa Boulevard to connect ultimately with Watsonville Road to the west and to Church Street to the east.

9. Thomas Road Extension

   Thomas Road will be extended westerly to intersect with the Tenth Street extension and terminate at Santa Teresa Boulevard.

10. Mesa Road/Bolsa Road Overcrossing

    These roads will be connected via a bridge over U.S. 101. Mesa Road should be realigned to provide a relatively straight roadway connecting Bolsa Road and Santa Teresa Boulevard.

11. Church Street Extension

    This street will be extended north to Cohansey Avenue.

In addition to these street extensions, improvements are required at several interchanges on U.S. 101 to maintain acceptable traffic service levels:

12. Construct a new interchange with U.S. 101 at Buena Vista Avenue.

13. Construct a new interchange with U.S. 101 at the Santa Teresa Boulevard intersection to the south.

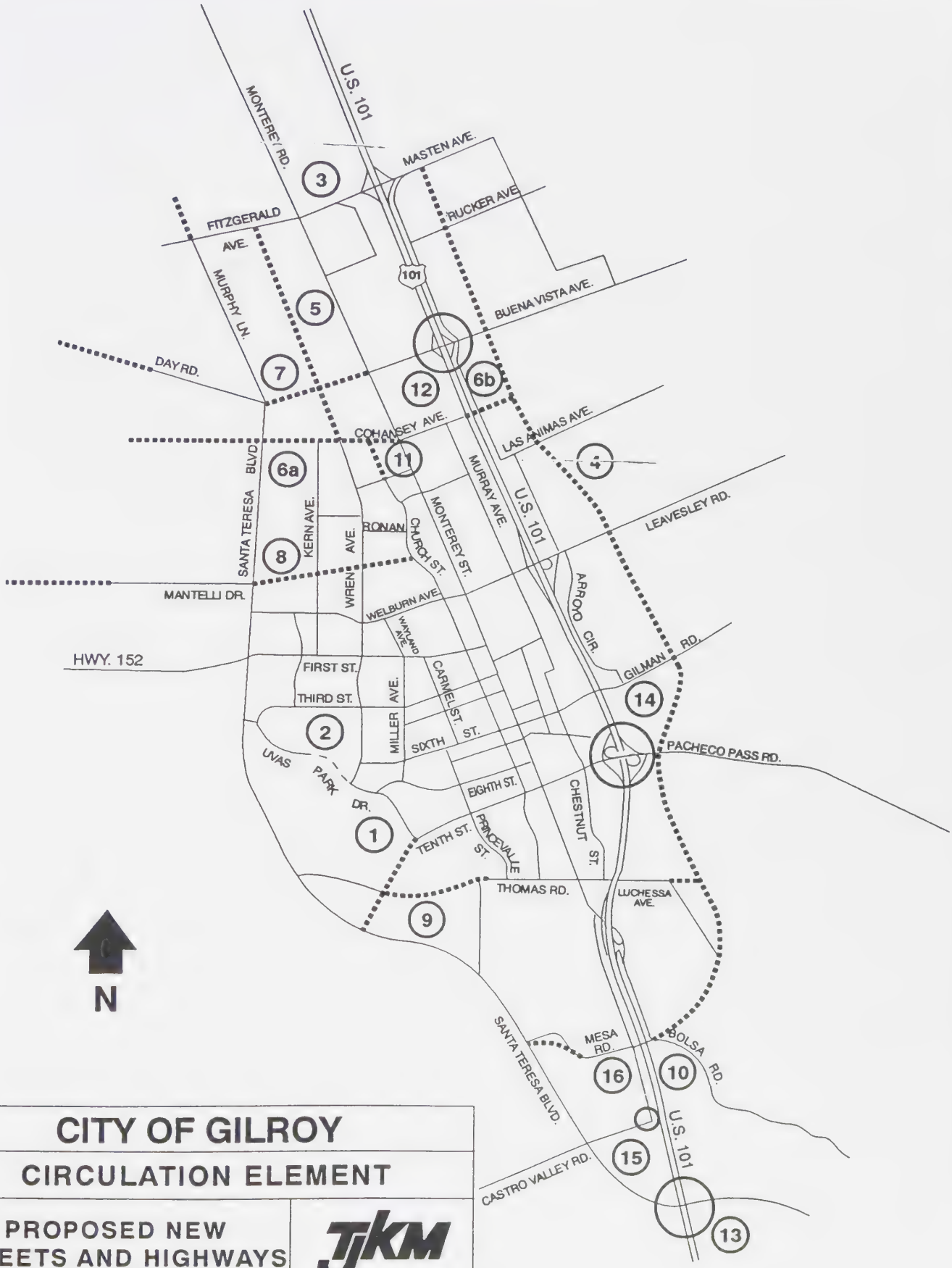
14. Convert the Tenth Street interchange with U.S. 101 to partial cloverleaf design.

15. Eliminate the at-grade intersection between Castro Valley Road and U.S. 101.

16. Eliminate the at-grade intersection between Mesa Road and U.S. 101.

Several improvements to existing roadway facilities are also necessary. It will be necessary to add lanes to Thomas Road, Tenth Street, Leavesley Road, First Street, Monterey Road, Wren Avenue, Santa Teresa Boulevard, Masten Avenue, U.S. 101, and State Route 152 west of Santa Teresa Boulevard. It will also be necessary to perform other roadway improvements, including installation of traffic signals based on Caltrans warrants and construction of railroad grade separations where warranted and feasible. Railroad grade separations should be considered for roadways where relatively high traffic volumes are expected in the future, including Masten Avenue/Fitzgerald Avenue, Buena Vista Avenue, Leavesley Road, Tenth Street, Thomas Road and possibly Sixth Street.

A comprehensive street capital improvement fee program should be adopted to fund all improvements based on the expected increase in traffic volumes throughout the City. A citywide fee should be employed since the planned improvements constitute a citywide system. Although residents in one part of the city may only rarely make direct use of transportation facilities located in another part of the city, they will nonetheless benefit from such facilities. The existence of adequate transportation capacity throughout Gilroy will ensure that no single facility or neighborhood will bear an excessive share of traffic.



CITY OF GILROY

CIRCULATION ELEMENT

PROPOSED NEW STREETS AND HIGHWAYS AND INTERCHANGE IMPROVEMENTS

JKM

FIGURE I

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APPENDIX II

GENERAL PLAN MAP

(To Be Incorporated Into The General Plan Appendices)

APPENDIX II

GENERAL PLAN MAP

The location of major existing and proposed circulation routes are shown on the General Plan Map.

Functional classifications of roadways in the City of Gilroy are as follows:

Limited Access: These roadways are limited access routes serving inter-urban, statewide and interstate travel. In view of these functions, as well as the fact that planning of these facilities rests largely with agencies outside of the city, policies of this Circulation Element seek to prevent excessive dependence upon Highway facilities for local trip making.

Three facilities carry the Limited Access classification in the City of Gilroy:

Freeway: U.S. 101

Expressway: Portions of Hecker Pass Highway west of Santa Teresa Boulevard.
Santa Teresa Boulevard

Arterial: These streets serve intra-urban travel primarily, carrying traffic from collector level streets to and from other parts of the City. Access to abutting property is subordinate to the primary function of moving traffic between neighborhoods. The number of driveways should be minimized based on this primary function. The following streets and street segments are classified as arterials:

- Wren Avenue north of First Street
- Monterey Road, except between Third and Seventh Streets
- Church Street between Cohansey Avenue and Thomas Road
- Chestnut Street between Luchessa Avenue and Tenth Street
- Bolsa Road
- The planned north-south roadway east of U.S. 101 between Masten Avenue and Bolsa Road
- Thomas Road/Luchessa Avenue
- Tenth Street/Pacheco Pass Highway
- Old Thomas Road
- Rossi Lane
- Gilman Road
- First Street
- Welburn Avenue east of Wayland Avenue
- Leavesley Road
- Farrell Avenue
- Cohansey Avenue
- Mantelli Drive east of Calle Del Rey
- Buena Vista Avenue
- Day Road
- Masten Avenue/Fitzgerald Avenue

Collector: Collector streets provide links between local streets and arterials designed to serve neighborhood traffic. This traffic may include trips between adjacent neighborhoods, but collector streets are not intended to handle cross-town traffic. An important collector street function is to provide access to abutting property. However, on higher-volume collectors, direct-access from single-family residential driveways should be discouraged or minimized for reasons of both traffic safety and residential livability.

Local Access Street: Local streets are intended to provide direct access to abutting land uses. All Gilroy streets not classified in one of the above categories are designated as local access streets.

CITY OF GILROY

CIRCULATION ELEMENT

GENERAL PLAN
ROADWAY SYSTEM

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FIGURE II

52-004 - 3/92 - KP

APPENDIX III

CITY BIKEWAY PLAN

(To Be Incorporated Into The General Plan Appendices)

APPENDIX III

CITY BIKEWAY PLAN

The California Department of Transportation document *Planning and Design Criteria for Bikeways in California* currently states that the minimum paved width for a two-way bike path (separated from motorized traffic) shall be eight feet, plus shoulders two feet in width, while the minimum width for a one-way bike lane (within the paved area of a street or highway) shall be five feet.

The standards contained in this document may be updated in the future to reflect new information regarding bicyclists' needs. Persons planning bikeways within the City of Gilroy should use the latest standards recommended by the California Department of Transportation.

CITY OF GILROY

CIRCULATION ELEMENT

BIKEWAYS

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FIGURE III